

Sample letter challenging a business to go greener:

Dear Coffee Shop,

I absolutely love your coffee. I am a frequent visitor; your French press is my absolute favorite! I really love your atmosphere and your support of local artists. While I enjoy my visits, I can't help but notice that your trash cans are always filled with disposable coffee cups.

So why not start capitalizing even more on reusable mugs? Research shows that not only would you save money by making a few simple adjustments but you could also make a big step towards helping our environment. Being an environmentally friendly business, you might even earn some new business when you spread the word!

- Have staff ask, "For here or to go?" to increase the use of your reusable mugs
  - Use of reusables increased 18% to 57% during a pilot test when customers were asked this simple question. ([recyclingadvocates.com](http://recyclingadvocates.com))
- Incentivize customers to use their own reusable mugs
  - A discount for each use
  - A punch card – get a free coffee on your 10<sup>th</sup> visit with a reusable mug
- Encourage reusables with education
  - Remind people that single use cups are not recyclable. A small sign by the register will do the trick!

You are likely aware of these practices, but my hope is to give you another customer perspective. Either way, thank you for providing our city with a cozy spot for delicious coffee. I hope you have a great day!

Sincerely,

Your loyal customer

# THE DISPOSABLE CUP CRISIS

Hello America. Did you know that more than 100 BILLION throw-away cups are sent to U.S. landfills each year?

That's enough cup trash to circle the earth an astounding 1,744 times!

Every time you use and toss a paper, plastic or styrofoam cup, it depletes resources, increases CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, escalates health risks, and adds to our global landfill crisis.

When 315 million Americans repeat this behavior daily, it adds up to a real problem.



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Mostly plastic-coated virgin paper

• **20 Million**  
trees are cut down to  
make paper cups each year

Every four paper cups are responsible  
for creating 1 pound of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions



**12 Billion**  
gallons of water are used to  
make a year's worth of  
paper cups

**53,000 HOMES**  
could be powered annually by energy  
needed to make & dispose of paper cups

**MOST PAPER CUPS ARE  
COATED WITH PLASTIC AND  
CAN'T BE RECYCLED**



The paper industry is  
the largest industrial  
consumer of water and  
third largest industrial  
greenhouse gas emitter



Polystyrene (PS) aka "Styrofoam"

**FOAM CUPS ARE MADE OF  
A NON-BIODEGRADABLE,  
PETROLEUM-BASED PLASTIC**



Contains toxic chemicals that can  
leach and threaten human health  
and reproductive systems

Foam litter hard to contain  
and is a significant component  
of land and water pollution

**Can be fatal when consumed  
by birds, fish and wildlife**



Polystyrene manufacturing 5th largest  
industrial producer of hazardous waste

Recycled at low rates & will languish  
in landfill for **500 years or more**



When incinerated by disposal  
companies produces up to 90  
toxic & hazardous chemicals



**TENS OF BILLIONS**  
of single-use plastic cups trashed  
at U.S. restaurants, cafes & events

Polyethylene Terephthalate (PETE)  
Polystyrene (PS) & Polypropylene (PP)

IN THE U.S. AIRLINE  
INDUSTRY ALONE ALMOST

**9 BILLION**  
PLASTIC CUPS ARE USED ANNUALLY

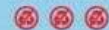


Plastic creates toxic pollution at  
every stage of its existence:  
manufacture, use, and disposal



**63 pounds**  
of plastic, per person, per year  
are trashed in the U.S., comprising  
up to 30% OF LANDFILL SPACE

In 2010, plastic cup recycling  
rates were so small it was  
considered negligible



Plastic trash makes up to 80% of all  
marine debris ...it's estimated we  
have 6 times more plastic trash in  
our oceans than plankton



Harmful chemicals leached by  
plastics are present in the  
bodies of almost every human  
being, including newborns

SOURCES: Infographic Research & Design by SteelysDrinkware.com

Cup Waste Data Sources >> Paper Cup Waste: U.S. EPA; Styrofoam Cup Waste: Environmental Defense Fund; Plastic Cup Waste: Compilation of government, restaurant, entertainment and event industry estimates.

>> Factoid Sources: U.S. EPA, Environmental Defense Fund, Plastic Pollution Coalition, Treehugger.com, wikipedia.org, International Agency for Research on Cancer, Californians Against Waste, Earth911, ChrisJordan.com, Alliance for Environmental Innovation, thinkoutsidethebin.com.

Please share this info to promote more thoughtful cup consumption & choose reusables whenever you can.